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SIX U.S. DIPLOMATS, HIDDEN BY CANADA. LEAVE IRAN SAFELY

CARRIED FORGED VISAS

Ottawa Shuts Its Embassy and Withdraws Staff — C.I.A. Said to Help

By BERNARD GWERTZMAN
Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, Jan. 29 — Six American Embassy employees, after hiding for three months in diplomatic residences in Teheran, flew out of Iran last weekend posing as Canadian diplomats and carrying forged Iranian visas, American and Canadian officials said today.

The escape of the six, who had been secretly receiving sanctuary in the Canadian Embassy, was undertaken in the utmost secrecy. Both the American and Canadian Governments were fearful throughout that the Iranian militants holding 50 other Americans hostage might learn of the six and try to capture them.

The Central Intelligence Agency helped forge the Iranian visas, according to a diplomatic source, and the Canadian Cabinet, at a special meeting, authorized the issuance of Canadian diplomatic passports to the Americans. Using these documents, they flew out of Iran on regular commercial flights while most of Iran was preoccupied with the results of Friday's presidential election.

Canadian Employees Leave

As a precautionary measure, the small Canadian Embassy staff remaining in Teheran, headed by Ambassador Kenneth Taylor, flew out of Iran yesterday, and the Canadian Prime Minister, Joe Clark, announced the temporary closing of the mission.

First word that the embassy closing was connected to the Americans came in a report published today by La Presse, a Montreal newspaper. The report was confirmed later. Neither the Canadian nor the American Government wanted the matter publicized because of concern over possible repercussions to the 53 Americans still held in Iran.

Hodding Carter 3d, the State Department spokesman, said today that the United States lists 50 Americans as being held hostage in the American Embassy in Teheran. L. Bruce Laingen, the chargé d'affaires of the embassy, and two other officers continue to live under virtual house arrest in the Iranian Foreign Ministry. Mr. Carter said that no other American officials are believed to be in Iran now that the six have fled.

The State Department listed the six as: Mark J. Lijek, a consular officer; his wife, Cora Amburn Lijek, a consular assistant; Robert C. Anders, a consular officer; Henry Lee Schatz, an agricultural attaché; Joseph D. Stafford, a consular officer, and his wife, Kathleen F. Stafford, a consular assistant.

They were all inside the newly built consular building in the large American Embassy compound when Iranian militants stormed and captured it on Nov. 4. According to Kim King, a 26-year-old American tourist who was with them, they escaped through a rear door into the street and separated. Mr. King left Iran on his own.

A Canadian Embassy spokesman here said that on the next day the six embassy workers showed up at the Canadian Embassy and were given sanctuary. Flora MacDonald, Canada's Minister for External Affairs, said the Americans lived in the residences of Canadian diplomats for most of the three months.

The decision to issue them Canadian passports was taken at a special Cabinet meeting, Miss MacDonald said. She would not confirm the La Presse report that Iranian visas, needed to leave the country, had been provided by the Americans. But a well-placed diplomatic source said that the C.I.A. had given "technical assistance."

U.S. Remained Silent

Hodding Carter said that the United States knew of the whereabouts of the six from the start, but had avoided saying anything about them publicly for their protection.

Some American news organizations learned earlier that several Americans attached to the embassy were in hiding in Teheran and agreed not to publish the information at the request of American officials.

Even though the six were reported safe and well, the State Department refused to say where they were today. One Canadian official said they were in West Germany, but American officials would not confirm this.

They will be flown to the United States soon, Mr. Carter said, and will be permitted to tell the press about their experiences if they want.

Details Are Lacking

There were details lacking tonight about the escape, and some inconsistencies. For instance, Mr. Carter said that the six had been in the Canadian Embassy, but Miss MacDonald said they were staying in individual residences. It is unclear where they went before they got to the Canadian Embassy.

The disclosure of their escape does clear up a mystery that developed soon after the takeover of the embassy.

At the time of the embassy seizure, it was reported that more than 70 Americans had been inside the compound. Then the total was given as 60 to 65. After 13 women and black men were released, the United States began referring to 50 hostages and three officers at the Foreign Ministry. The apparent discrepancy was explained by the disclosure that the six had been in hiding.

There was further confusion about the number of hostages during a Christmas visit by three American clergymen, who said they had met with only 43 hostages. Subsequently some of the leaders of the militant Iranians at the embassy said that several of the hostages had not wanted to see the clergymen. Some letters that were recently received in this country came from hostages who were not included in the group of 43. The United States has never received a list of the captives' names from the Iranians but insists that from its own evidence there should be 50 in the embassy.

Concern for Hostages Persists

Although there was satisfaction here and in Ottawa that the escape was successful, it was muted by continuing concern over the hostages. Officials said they would have preferred no publicity about the episode to avoid unduly upsetting the Iranian militants holding the hostages in the American Embassy.

Mr. Carter was asked if there was a possibility of reprisals against the hostages and he said he saw no reason for any. "It would be an irrational act, but I can't read the minds of the jailers," he said.

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As to prospects for the release of the hostages, Mr. Carter had none to offer today. United States officials said that they expect Iran's new President, Abolhassan Bani-Sadr, to try to win a consensus among the Iranian leadership on negotiations for ending the crisis, but that this would take time.

According to Mr. King, the tourist who was in the American Consulate on Nov. 4, he and Mr. Lijek and Mr. Stafford were the first ones to escape the embassy compound.

"I looked down the street really good," Mr. King said in an interview, "and said 'let's go.'"

"We didn't feel any need to run," he said, noting that outside the embassy area he found no hostility toward Americans.

Mr. King said they separated and agreed to meet the next day at the British Embassy, but the others never joined him there.

